



Duncan Wilder Johnson is a renowned spoken word performer from Boston, as well as a photographer and vocalist for the hardcore metal band *Hillside 176*. He is often referred to as "the dude who does way too much stuff." A strong supporter of independent art circles in Boston, Duncan chronicles many scenes in *GIG*. From reading and the smallest New England coffee dining heavily all over a stage during *176* set, to planning numerous shows that living life from gig to e rewards.

"Duncan Wilder has a vivid and morbid imagination that filled me with a feeling of disgust, but also of hope and inspiration."

-JS (Punk Planet).

"He dissects the rock culture with infectious energy..."

-David Wildman (Boston Globe)

"He's got a funny, insightful piece on heavy metal that begs to be heard by anyone who's cranked the volume to 11"

-Cary Carioli (Boston Phoenix)

This notebook hasn't been in my hands in days. It needs more attention like a baby with a constant messy diaper.



Duncan Wilder Johnson

wellborn something for the gift store
Jenks, the ~~rich~~ ^{embracing} very fine, it

DUNCAN
WILDER
JOHNSON
SPOKEN
WORD
DESTRUCTION.



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kid! Stop fussing over everything. You'll be all right. You run in four hundred directions at once and stress over everything. It all works out in the end. You'll be fine."

"Yea, I guess you're right," I reassure myself.

I finish washing my hands and flick the excess drops back into the sink. With a ninety degree turn to the right, I make my way to one of those hand dryer-blower things. I hate them. They always take too long to do the job and never finish it to a level of completion.

Walking back from the bathroom to Tara, Ben, and Craig, they inform me, "Dude, we're gonna take off. There's a Ground Round a couple of miles down."

"But dude, I already ordered fries and orange juice and paid for it."

"Fuck... all right."

We wait a few minutes and I grab my food. As soon as we get back to the car, Ben pulls out a hamburger from his pocket and we begin to laugh hysterically.

"Yea! Stolen Food. Five Finger discount is the only way to live," Ben teaches us.

"Fuck Ground Round, let's just go home," Tara says. We all agree, take long breathes, and sit through the car ride back to Boston. Patient.

I start thinking how stupid my orange windbreaker looks.

It was a Christmas gift from my mother: another garment purchased at "The Gap." Yea? I felt the uncontrollable urge to decorate it with a black marker a few months back. It was too nice. I had to fuck it up a little. I let this kid I used to work with do his graffiti thing on some sections. The additions made it "my" windbreaker, not "The Gap's."

"What am I doing? I look like an idiot," I say to myself. "What is this all about? These Spoken Word Shows? These Hardcore Gigs? All this sweat, anxiety, and second guessing. Am I ever going to fell right? Feel complete? There always seems to be one sore thumb keeping me from a smile. Usually it's a love interest, a lonely hope for the never possible. Jesus, Dana and Rich finally did it. They are in it for life, never alone again. Damn."

I study my eyes, nose, and complexion, trying to imagine how they'll transform in ten years, twenty years, fifty years. "What will I be doing then?" I ask. "Will I still be performing, making photographs, and loving music?"

I try to picture myself at thirty four. Maybe in front of a stocked auditorium, performing a monologue about when I was in college and how I wasted hours by the phone waiting for some girl to call.

Maybe walking on a beach with my kids who chase after seagulls like clumsy hunters with playful minds and my future wife laughing at our wonderful children.

Or perhaps I'm sitting in a chair, in front of a television, with a one room apartment struggling to keep me company.

At thirty four my face looks the same, just a little more hardened with a hairline receding at a turtle's pace. I watch my chapped lips from the future as they say, "Hey

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line: _____

REST STOP INTERFERENCE

This rest stop on the Mass Pike feels like moldy coffee grounds left in the machine for weeks. It features non obtrusive music played down to simple drum machine and electronic horn parts. What a travesty to hear Led Zeppelin performed by the equivalent of the Parent Teachers Association.

We have our choice of diet: Roy Rodgers, Popeye's chicken, or Burger King: all the grease you can handle at an affordable price. I order French Fries and an orange juice from Roy Rodgers and leave Tara, Ben, and Craig to keep guard of the "fixin's bar" while I use the sickly effulgent bathroom.

We are dressed in tastefully tattered wardrobes from our adventure in Western Mass. The wedding of Rich Mackin and Dana Sibley has brought us together in silly overdressed costumes. I make a quick glance at myself in the mirror on my way to the third urinal from the left. I shake my head in slight embarrassment when I see my reflection: shaved head, pinstriped dress pants, white button down shirt, pea green tie left loose from hours of drinking and photographing, and my bright orange wind breaker which ties the whole look together for high fashion beyond Vogue Magazine. What do I care if I'm awkwardly dressed? Who am I going to pick up in a rest stop?

I do my business and wash my hands at the porcelain sinks like a surgeon preparing for the operating room. Another look in the mirror. The acne on my forehead concerns me to a point where I begin the strict annihilation commonly known as "popping zits." I'm twenty one years old and I can't believe I'm still doing this.

for
Jessica, Rich, Clay, and Hillside 176

That my body had simply mingled with the blankets and
instead of succumbing to your sheer intensity,
thoughts of what day it was, what errands I had to run,
appointments to meet, and problems to face rose to
my consciousness
I had to be somewhere in less than one hour
I had phone calls to make, email to answer, faxes to send,
and reservations to make
The pedestal on which I had placed us was bulldozed to
make way for productivity
Vivid moments in my mind never existed
Smiles you gave never formed and
Dreams never seen because there's never time to sleep

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denial
repress
forget

my muscles tighten as I hear their tiny cries
engulf every joint in my scrawny body
ache like cheap hard liquor hang-overs

I can hear the plastic bag crease and shimmy
in the night wind
as it's tossed into the aluminum trash can:
a bent cylinder stoned to death
by red and black spray paint:
the marked territory of vandals long since removed

the defenseless beings plummet to an awkward stage of
junk mail and left over dinners

hearts stop beating
lungs stop breathing
life stops giving

...

I woke up thinking I could still smell your hair
Thinking I could find my face with a nice fit between your
chin and collar bone
Our arms and legs intertwined like a chain link fence
The eight AM sun stabbing through my venetian blinds
and projecting onto my speckled gray blanket
A comfortable stillness in your "about to rise and face the
day" eyelids
Yet, as my retina's processed that eight AM light, I
realized you were absent

I can't let your invasion dictate.
I can't let your haunting frighten.
It's time for retaliation.

...

the animals are screaming outside
torturous moans for help

cacophonous voices of innocence

makes the muscles in my neck creek like door hinges

in old New England farm houses

not even old enough to open their eyes
animals so young the only thought is

mother

stuffed into a black trash bag

suffocating in a plastic hell

oxygen becomes carbon dioxide

as the new born creatures hang on for life

they scramble over each other with desperate scratches
fight each other like sworn enemy soldiers
not playful rough housing or even small tiffs

but malicious swings and kicks
to reach that last molecule of life

what runs through the murders' mind

INTRODUCTION TO THE DESTRUCTION

Hey. Thanks for checking out *GIG*. This is my third book/zine and so far I believe my best. I feel as though I should explain something. My last two books *Sleeping In Beds Of Broken Glass* and *Reach Out And Kill Someone* listed my name as "Duncan Wilder". My full name honestly is Duncan Wilder Johnson. That's what it says on my driver's license and birth certificate. I'm not really sure why I left off my last name to begin with. I think it has to do with change. A personal rebirth.

I was young (not that I'm an old man these days) and I moved to Boston to go to school. I was starting over. My band broke up. I began the spoken word performances. It was all new. Why not have a new name?

Well, things became confusing when people saw my license or I had to register for classes. I didn't want to live a double life. A stage name or pen name felt pretentious. So, I started to use my full name.

With that out of the way, you are probably wondering what the hell you're holding in your hand.

This is my favorite writing I've done through the later half of 1997 and almost all of 1998. I write a lot.

Sometimes I think not enough. Except, I'm kind of a workaholic. I also make photographs, sing for a band called *Hillside 176*, and perform spoken word as much as possible. The running joke with most of my friends and acquaintances is that I don't have time to stop and chat because I have to "start a record label," or "make a CD," or "help out for some independent art project," in addition to going to college, having a part-time job, and managing

enough sleep to do it all again the next day. My friends are right. I'm somewhat of a maniac like that.

That's where the concept of "the gig" comes in. When I write this stuff, my life is gig to gig. Everything is a gig. Reading and talking at some event is "a spoken word gig." Playing with the band is "a Hillside gig." Going to school to get in the darkroom and print is "a photo gig." Visiting my parents for a day in the summer is "a family gig." The list goes on and on.

The chapter "GIG" in this book is a series of journal entries to illustrate this point. The other chapters (or tracks) are collections of poems, short stories, and performance texts. I'm trying to mix it up and keep it interesting.

That's basically it. I hope you like this writing. Feel free to write me. I can be reached through the REDBACKPACK addresses. I like mail. Mail is fun. Rock on.

Duncan Wilder Johnson
11/11/98

The pig inquires. The boys incoherently mumble something back.

Again, the same frat boy exclaims, "I really don't fucking care anymore. Whatever Brian says is shit and you guys can make fun of me all you want! Fuck you all!"

The cop finishes writing the tickets and walks down the platform with satisfaction. It's a shame there aren't laws enforced against drunken conformists in subway stations. I'd like to write a ticket for the cops who only pay attention to the small cracks in the sidewalk and not the pot holes in the street.

...

You've infiltrated the connections of my brain.

Forced electronic impulses to mutate, mutilate and mutinize.

You've brought on disease and never bothered to find a cure.

Caused blood stained images to haunt my memories like shell-shocked veterans falling into episode after episode of horrific convulsion.

I can't figure out exactly what it is you do to me, but it leaves me chilled in a state of wrenching withdrawal.

Quick conversations end with me cursing myself degrading myself and torturing myself as if self inflicted wounds were a favorite hobby of mine.

As if I poured gasoline over the blood ridden wounds, stirred with a cooking spoon, and called it lunch.

As if self destruction was like a sex education: everyone had to take a beginner's class in eighth grade.

Not eating.

Never sleeping.

Actually finding day time television quite compelling, interesting and even scholarly.

I can't let your disease terminate.

American people, he shouts action star one liners like, "I takes two to tango Saudi Arabia!"

Damn, I'm running to the poles right now.

...

Four million degrees inside the 9th street station.

Sweat accumulates like moths to light bulbs. Everyone is slowing down, bringing thoughts and actions to a mellow cruising speed, and waiting for the train to Hoboken, NJ.

Three kids in baggy pants, timberlands, tank tops, and baseball hats lean against one of the support columns.

Five frat kids with wardrobes provided by

Abercrombie and Fitch assemble on the other end of the platform like specimens for the All American Good Guy Championship finals.

The three kids leaning against the pole don't say much, just relax, letting the sweat drip from their foreheads. The smoke from their cigarettes drags into their breathing passages and blood vessels like the falling of dust on window sills in spring.

One of the frat kids yells, "Yes I'm an alcoholic and I fuck ugly women and you can say whatever the fuck you want because I really don't fucking care anymore."

His frat buddies begin to chuckle like sit com laugh buttons while everyone else on the platform has a slight jerk once they hear his booming voice. Though, no one really cares. It's too hot to care.

However, a plain clothes cop struts his shit up to one of the kids in the baggy pants next to the column and declares, "Smoking is prohibited in the station." Then the cop pats them all down for weapons and asks for ID. Some pull out wallets. Others take off one boot and display their drivers licenses. The cop smiles like a joker card and gives a tiny guffaw as he writes tickets for the boys. "Thought you might get away with smokin', huh?"

HEAVY METAL part II

6/17/98

I'm feeling pretty **METAL** right about here because I spent my day with those truly evil deities of destruction known as **SLAYER**!

My buddy Skimpy Ratnutz woke me up around noon giving me the instructions of the day, "Dude! Be at my house by 1:30 so we have enough time to get on the train and see **SLAYER**...dude...get up dude...we have to rock dude....it's **SLAYER**!"

"Affirmative," I coughed into the phone with my voice still not ready to face the day. **SLAYER** were to be signing autographs at Newbury Comics in Braintree. I had the day off, Skimpy was ready to rock, and with flying V shaped guitars dancing in my head I quickly showered and downed coffee. Like the sickly angst driven Hardcore/Metal kid that I had become, I used **SLAYER**'s new album, "Diablos in Musica," to power my morning rituals like an overloaded electric generator on PCP.

In my humble opinion the new **SLAYER** album, was a testament to the true forces of **METAL**. Four dudes who had seen it all as far as **METAL** was concerned, had rocked out to a slower, more chug sounding compendium of aggression. Resembling a Demon caught gurgling mouthwash in a highway rest stop, the savage attitudes of **SLAYER** pushed me out the door and on to Ratnutz's home two blocks away.

Once Skimpy and I were ready, the two of us walked down to the train, excited like 10 year olds at the gates of Disney World. And after an hour long train ride and a brief stint in a cab with a repeatedly pierced young lad in an Ozz Fest T-shirt named Julio, Ratnutz and I found ourselves standing in line with the elite youth of the South Shore **METAL** scene. Denim everywhere! Mullets, work

boots, and black concert T-shirts swarmed the sidewalk of the Newbury Comics strip mall like war generals meeting for council. Conversations like, "Dude? Didja hear what happened ta Dave? Got his ass kicked by skinheads.

Dude? Seen my new Camaro? Kicks ass dude. It's got a 442 with fuel injection n'shit...dude. **SLAYER!**" invaded my ears like a blitz in a touch football game gone aerie under the tyranny of a Black Sabbath record.

Some crusty punk kids with Nurosis and Nausia

patches crudely sewn to their dirty sweatshirts came to join the line. Although, their patience was next to nil, for they retreated. Upon reaching a safe parking lot distance from the **METAL** kids, they screamed back, "PUNK

FUCKING ROCK," while walking to their suburban homes with white picket fences and home cooked meals from Mom. The **METAL** kids, stunned that someone would screw with them in such large numbers, had nothing more to retort than, "Faggots!" A smattering of snickers, claps, and devil horn signs made with hands immediately followed.

SLAYER finally arrived and commenced an assembly line of autograph signing. Children of **METAL** would exit the store once their posters and CD's were signed. With both arms raised as if victorious from a battle scene in the movie "BRAVEHEART", they'd growl "**SLAYER!!!!!!!!!!!!**" as long as their lungs and larynx would allow. Kerri King (guitarist) would take the first CD, scribble his signature, then pass to Jeff Hanneman (guitarist), then Paul Bostaph (drummer), and lastly Tom Arya (bass player/lead vocals). Tom was the coolest. Not that the other members weren't cool, but as we approached Tom, he just greeted us with a, "Hey dudes," that blew Skimp and I away. We gave the band copies of our CD. Tom laughed at the title saying, "On Tour Without A Band...Ha! Spoken Word. That's fuckin' cool man!"

"Actually, that reminds me of a girl I used to know who wuz wearin' a tampon and had sex with her husband. She had to go to the doca cuz it got stuck way up thea!"

"Oh my God!"
"Ya!"

They continued on like this. The mixture of their conversation and the constant jarring back and forth of the subway car made me sick. Once the train traveled above ground, these older ladies went off about how all the buildings and streets had changed.

"Oh, Forsyth Street! This is great. It's so different. Marino Center! Au Bon Pain! Wonderful!"

I felt so ill. I exited the train before my stop, walked home, and took a nap.

...

7/4/97

Kickin' DJ Spooky in my ears, rockin' the commuter rail out to my parents' house, and busin' it tonight with Overcast. It's the fourth of July today and being the cynic that I am, I realize that Independence Day (the holiday, not the movie) is less and less about our revolution or "for the people by the people." Independence Day is about watching fire trucks and community groups in a parade, ugly nationalism, blowing shit up, and getting drunk at the always required "family barbecue." Wonderful! A country of action movie stars. We might as well elect Steven Segal as our President.

Imagine that?
There's a conflict with another nation. Steven Segal isn't the commander and chief of our armed forces. He IS our armed forces!

"All right Sadam Housan. It's party time!" Segal says in a Presidential address. Instead of interrupting regular programming for comforting assurance to the

TOM ARYA LIKED THE TITLE OF OUR CD!!! How cool was that?

Andre showed up and had some things signed, including his hairy gut: Mmmmm.....

Ratnutz and I went over to a Dunkin' Donuts once we had our records signed. Full on dorkness infected every word which spewed from our mouths. "Dude, we just met **SLAYER**. Dude, Tom Arya liked the title of our CD and laughed. Dude, Tom Arya said 'Hey Dude' TO US. Dude I'm losing my shit," Ratnutz would expound as I made air guitar gestures and distortion sounds while screaming, "ANGEL OF DEATH!!!"

Skimpy Ratnutz asked the two girls working the counter at Dunkin' Donuts if they were going to cut out for a bit and see **SLAYER**. "Oh no," one replied. "I don't know who HE is?"

"I don't know who HE? is," Skimpy and I thought. What the hell was that? **SLAYER** wasn't a "he", but instead a "they." Get the pronouns straight!

Nevertheless, we drove back to Boston with Andre, making a quick stop at the illustrious South Shore Plaza for some gourmet delight from the "food court."

Later that night, I found myself in Avalon at the **SLAYER** show, surrounded by white trash **METAL** kids, like ants to a naked pile of strawberry jam. It was wall to wall **SLAYER** T-shirts, heavy metal bandannas, and dirty long hair. Every once in a while a chorus of growls and hollers would erupt shouting, "**FUCKIN' SLAYER!**" The dim lights and ever present odor of cheap beer somehow made it feel like home. It reminded me of all those kids in Northbridge, MA with fringe leather jackets and cowboy boots wasting their days away in Cumberland Farms parking lots. In a way, it was kind of beautiful.

The first band, System Of A Down, played a short set of angst ridden yet strangely high pitched music with strict time changes. Their music reminded me if **SATAN**

He had already drank all the coffee in the house. Anxiety flowed through his cardiovascular system like a meat cleaver slices through cantaloupe. Drunk on caffeine and high on motivation, he impatiently paced the kitchen.

The door violently slammed open and SHE glided across the cold tile floor like an angel on "E". She swayed sexily towards him and gently pressed her forefingers into his nipples. She pushed him into the lazi-boy easy chair; her mouth slightly open and cocked to the side like a curious front door to a haunted house. Her mouth reached a one inch distance from his ear as she straddled his lap. He could feel her warm breath and tidbits of saliva as she whispered the words, "I just met the man I'm going to marry. His name is Andy and he's a clerk at Store 24 down the street. He's beautiful and can fuck way better than you can!"

TRUE STORY:

There were these three women behind me on a train.

Their conversation rambled on a tangent like:

"Ya know, they were just sittin' thea smoochin' and I wanted to tell them to cut it the hell out. I mean, no one wanted to sit there watchin' them."

"Really?"

"Ya!"

"I knew this couple back in high school who both had braces and they got stuck togetha when they were kissing."

"Oh jeez!"

"Ya!"

HIMSELF took too much speed and just freaked out with paranoia. Clutch came up next. The boys from Baltimore were back spreading their wisdom of car engines, space, and the usual redneck philosophies.

Hell Awaiting, the dudes in my band, Michael Kennedy, and I sat anxious with anticipation. Eleven o'clock struck, the lights went down and the crowd began to chant repeatedly, "**SLAY-ER, SLAY-ER, SLAY-ER**," like drones reciting the pledge of allegiance in Elementary school, but way fucking cooler.

SLAYER opened up with syncopated red stage lights, evil guitar power cord, and cymbal splash. "Hell Awaits" was the first song, a lively little ditty about burning your flesh off. The place exploded in storm of bodies swinging and smashing everything in sight as if Hell Itself had risen from it's fiery depths and invaded the club.

SLAYER rocked an approximate hour and a half set with all the classic anthems, "South of Heaven," "War Ensemble," "Dead Skin Mask," "Reign in Blood," and obviously "Angel of Death." Songs of war genocide, hell, fire, and death were mutually enjoyed amongst the crowd.

In my opinion, **SLAYER** doesn't advocate these practices, but rather critiques and comments on the destruction of the human race; (i.e.) all the evils that humans have committed to one another. All the murder, rape, and annihilation we know to disgust and loath is the same evil that's somewhere buried within us all. Together, we and **SLAYER** both know these practices are atrocious and horrible. I don't think **SLAYER** glorifies any of it. Instead, they create the most aggressive music possible to illustrate these tortures. Aggression. That's what it comes down to. We all wanted to rip someone to shreds at least once in our lives. **SLAYER** just says, "Dude, that's cool, but instead of chopping your girlfriend to pieces, why not simply spend the eight dollars on a cassette copy our

...

The headache began by piercing his frontal lobe, electrifying his mind and sending shooting pains to that space behind his eyes. The headache controlled him. He was forced to drop to his knees and fall his bedroom floor. He grabbed his scalp and rubbed forcefully with all the strength in his hands. He used circular motions on his temples. The headache tore through his thoughts like the deconstruction of an old apartment building by means of a wrecking ball. Arsonists set fire to the rubble inside his mind, burning and releasing fumes into his thinking center. Ideas ceased to be ideas, but turned into low pitched screams through gritted teeth. His face dove to the floor like a swan fishing for breakfast.

The headache induced sleep.

His slumber pleasantly drifted in and out of his subconscious. He was at a party, having philosophical conversations with fiery faces. They discussed the paintings of Hieronymous Bosche and the latest Presidential scandal, but came to no conclusions.

Eventually, he realized the party was a cult initiation. The gathering was nothing more than a waiting room. Little by little, party goers were sucked into small classrooms like spitting lakes and rivers into ponds and streams. Upon entering his classroom, the man woke up.

He stood up from the bedroom floor. The headache had ended it's torment. He opened the door of his bedroom and strolled down the hallway, coated with off-white paint and boring family pictures. The man walked into the living room, were his roommates were watching TV. Plopping himself on the couch, he joined his companions as they witnessed the destruction known as the mighty news: the never ending negative social comments which fertilized the tumors of his brain.

...

I have ripped off my flesh as a means of repentance
My mind has become stoic and insincere, causing my
mouth to spew lies and blood
The blood mixes with the lies to form a new concoction, a
potion for intoxication
A compound for another personality
After consuming this new beverage, a feeling of running
five miles, never eating, never sleeping, and always
drinking coffee takes over my nervous system
Sending it into a state of empty shock
I own nothing
Not even my skin
It's being used as a piece of collateral
I have made promises I can never fulfill and now each one
of my debtors is tracking me down like a grizzly hunt
in the Northwest Continental United States
Apologies reach nowhere, straining for the summits of
mountains like a child an inch away from a cookie jar
The mountains transform, growing rust and mold, and
become gigantic sharp spikes for my impaling
I run towards the spikes and take an enormous leap into
the atmosphere
The air tastes like uranium
In flight, I inhale through my nose
A hot odor stuns my sinuses, disorienting my perception of
weightlessness
A rush of panic and bliss rule my brain
Descending faster than the speed of light, I finally fall to
the ground, landing six inches away from the spike
Forced to live without skin or an acceptance of my
apologies.

album "Haunting The Chapel", and rock out with us
screaming about it. Okay dude. It's cool. WE KNOW
HOW YOU FEEL." **SLAYER** is the cheapest therapist in
you'll ever find.

So they finished the set with "Angel of Death" and the
house lights came on. I purchased a T-shirt with a big
devil on the front and began the walk home. The mist in
the air of a warm summer night in Boston cooled me down
to a level where I could actually sleep. And that I did,
next to my autographed copy of "Divine Intervention."

TEETH

His teeth were hideous
Yellow, worn, and speaking lies

He screamed in this uptight half-psychotic, half-drunk

tone

He hired prostitutes and conned them into disgusting
sexual deeds that were beyond the normal customer
routine

He brought them to an army-green-house which had fallen
apart from decades of drunken laziness like war
veterans crumble from shell shock

The teeth had separated

Forming wide gaps and exhibiting the once bloody scabs
from gingivitis

He insisted the prostitutes lick the gaps
Achieving a strange power trip

Making the loose marbles rattle within his head

His mother had grown quite old and frail

Whenever money was needed for the rent, the mother
would walk the 2.5 miles to the bank like a

determined soldier secretly crossing enemy lines
Withdraw an exuberant amount of cash

And walk back to the shell shocked house

The verbal battles between the old woman and the man
with the corroded teeth could be heard throughout the
tight rural neighborhood

Specific words could never be distinguished but crazed
anger and frustration became prevalent in their tones

Once, a boy spent an entire summer painting the titanium
white farm house next door

2. Me and some guy were having this diving contest in
this really rocky quarry. The first guy to die loses.

3. There's a father and a son. The son is a serial killer
and stashes the bodies in the back swamp behind the house
or in the furnace. The father turns the son in.

4. There was this strange religious cult sucking my friends
in. Centralized on a campground, there were several
different phases of the initiation. I didn't venture past the
first phase. The next time I went back was merely to
rescue my friend Adam. I think I saved him?

5. I was about to break some righteous kiaking record.
The wet suit I wore, equipped my ears with headphones
which only played Jimi Hendrix songs. My kiak was one
of those huge sea kiaks like the ones you see on PBS in
"real life adventure stories." There was a rope attached to
the kiak. It slowly let out as the kiak and I descended the
wall onto the Charles River by the Mass Ave bridge. The
waves moved with anger like a two year old who couldn't
have ice-cream before dinner. All I had to do was paddle
to the Museum of Science as fast and as hard as my puny
arms would allow. As soon as I heard Jimi Hendrix
croon, "Hey Joe where are you going with that gun in your
hand?" from the headphones, I woke up.

...

There's no need for you to insult me like that. I
wasn't staring at you. It was a quick glance and that's all.
Why you unnecessarily barked, "What the fuck are you
looking at?" as I passed by was beyond me. I only gave a
quick toss of my eyes at a worthless system of blood
trapped in a weak minded fortress.

I grab a slice of fire from his hand like shoplifting a pair of pants and chuck the flame into his eye sockets.

Fear swells through his veins.

Upon impact with the fire, gigantic curdling screams erupt from his throat like a frog on it's last minutes of life, desperately searching for those last croaks.

He slowly burns and returns to the dark red enflamed caves to rest until his next terrorist taunt.

...

We sat on the roof, amongst the skyscrapers. She said, "Do you have time me?" Her voice questioned and quivered like a long slow note on a cello. I went off about how I hated myself, why my creative projects were the only things I trusted, and where she stood in the realm of such things.

At that point, I loathed myself more than usual. She thought I was amazing. I thought pointing a pistol at my head would even everything out, but that's never an answer.

Then, she stood in the doorway of her kitchen like a defeated statue. Decorated with music and children gurgling from plastic cups. Her eyes moaned and teared like vicious screams through clenched teeth. Her tears flipped switches in my brain. Switches that stole feelings of genuine apology and instigated a haunting guilt.

...

A FEW DREAMS:

1. Seth and I were being blamed for someone's death and were on our way to jail.

The augments ran like clockwork
Everyday the boy was entertained between 3 and 4 o'clock
with the tormented drunken screams and almost
inaudible cursing

Soon enough, the old woman died
No one really knew how, but then again no one really
cared about the trash occupying broken down house
The man of the teeth had no way to pay the rent because
the money from his mother's account had been
secured and he had no access

Anxiety attacked his disconnected mind
The teeth came to power
Ruling over the man

After months of issued statements from the bank with no
response, the bank had no choice but to take action
Sending two officials to the house turned out to be a bad
idea

When the officials arrived, they saw all the unopened mail
in the mailbox
The front door was unlocked and they proceeded into the
stinky bombed out looking house
Only to find a pair of teeth gnawing on what used to be a
man

RIDE THE BUS

Ride the bus
Because you are not cool enough to drive a car
Ride the bus
Kick it freestyle while holding a handrail
Ride the bus
Each block is a test in balance and intestinal fortitude
Yes my sons and daughters, we have found ourselves among the
demons: kids who were just released from middle school!
Boys wrestle and beat the shit out of each other to combat sexual
frustration
Girls roll their eyes and make the boys drool.
Chatter
Clatter
Spitter
Spatter
"Yo! you remember that dude back at Ruggles? The one that I spit
on! Ha! Ha! what a muthafucka!"
Yes!
This is the goal of our youth: complete assholeedom.
Ride the bus
Huntington, South Huntington, and Centre Streets: The Trail of
Tears!
Ride the bus
Keep crammed between 3 kids giving you bad looks
Ride the bus
The alterna-teens have come to power!
Ride the bus
They stare me down, frown, pound for pound
Ride the bus
I'm not wearing the right Sublime, Green Day, or Sugar Ray T-shirt,
Thus I'm not really Punk Rock
Ride the bus

I attempt to stay neutral but continuously fail when I hear
your voice transmitted over the electronic wires of the
telephone.
You simply saying, "Please leave a numeric message
only," can break me like a scratched, gutted, and
snapped vinyl twelve inch.
But your coldness, your strict charge and business sense,
all the things that initially impressed me, turn us
frozen.
And I'm left staring into the street lamps, watching the
rain gush by tiny illuminations; whispering,
whispering, "I love a rainy night."
...
There's a man at my feet, driving hot coals into my heels.
He smells like sulfur and kerosene.
He moves like Fred Estare meets KRS1 in a
methamphetamine dream.
His black tuxedo is stained with the dust of highways like
Greyhound buses contaminated with psychotic
drunks on their way to Columbus, Ohio.
The man at my feet laughs.
Laughs in long intoxicated drones.
He keeps stabbing my feet, legs, and back with the coals,
branding tally marks into my skin, as if stealing
years off my lifetime.
His laughs grow louder.
I run and look over my shoulder as he screams, "Hell has
not yet frozen over," like a referee in a nightmarish
basketball game you can never win.
He transforms into train schedules, appointments, digital
clocks, commitments, money, and worries.
I stop and spin around.
This expression of shock dictates his face as if he never
conceived I would ever fight back.

BLEACH IN THE EYES

The tide is high but these days, trying to roll on becomes harder and harder.

I stand on my back porch, witnessing great bursts of rain attack the other apartments, gusts of water charge at trees, packets of liquid the size of triple extra large duffel bags force telephone poles to sway like drunken frat boys on Saturday nights in rural college towns.

Immediately, I thought of you and that song, "I Love A Rainy Night."

You as a glowing child in a sun dress, barefoot, dancing clumsily with a wide brimmed hat too large for your small angelic head.

Prancing around your fathers living room, chanting the chorus, "I luv a rainnyyyy nite!"

And the thunder claps for at least two minutes as you gaze out the window in wonder.

I run through my apartment with a slight jog, towards the front porch to gather a better perspective of the storm. The intersection in front of my house lights up like a stage in an auditorium, under the bursts of lightning.

Rain shoots down at impressive speeds, exploding in numerous craters as it hits the pavement.

Sometimes my moods act like rain: only expressed as fast, hard hitting, sucker-punching, angry acts of unneeded bleach in the eyes.

Juvenile like the end of the world is when you're picked last for kickball or you can't face the day, so you float through the motions like a ghost - always frowning saying nothing, accepting every task at hand.

The rain, tepid like stale coffee.

Warm air, cold water, the schizophrenic signals I try not to read from you.

GIG

5/20/97

Did a really bad show tonight at the Mass Art Film show. It was depressing. People were talking through the whole thing. It wasn't set up right. Part of it was my fault. It shouldn't be like, "Here's a film show that Duncan's doing spoken word at?" Fuck that.

I'm worried about this show on Saturday for that same reason.

LATER

I'm still in a bad mood from the shit-ass show last night. Fuck those people who talk through my sets. They fuel me to take on more. I just woke up. I wish I could be in a perpetual dream. The others in the real world, gawking at my narcoleptic state, might not be all that into it. Sleeping rocks. It's the best time. You're warm, usually comfortable, not hungry.

I had this dream the other night where I was in the darkroom at my old high school. They had new equipment like this cylinder which worked similarly to Russian dolls that fit together and inside one another other. You placed your print inside one cylinder and through each chamber, the paper would receive the correct chemical treatment.

I'd like to sleep forever... but not be dead. Fuck dead.

EVEN LATER

I'm on a bus going to Harvard Square. There, I'm supposed to hop another bus traveling to the very outskirts of Cambridge. At that point, I'm hooking up with JT to work on the REDBACKPACK web page.

Yes, I'm still annoyed about last night's gig. I don't know why I did it in the first place. This shit wastes my time. Feeling failure is the worst.

Going through Allston, I realize it's the poor version of Brighton and Brookline. There's so many shops. I think I want to live here after I graduate. Then again, I want to live on the road too. Decisions, decisions blah blah fuckin' blah....

One cool thing about last night: when Skimp and I were reading, some of the parents to the film makers shook their heads, mumbling, "I just don't get it?"

5/24/97

I'm at this outdoor show in Oxford, MA. There are a lot of rednecks and metal kids here. The band on right now keeps asking where the beer is and then dedicates the next song to "every fuckin' one of you!" They bang their heads and try to assimilate Metallica and Biohazard as much as possible. They request, "I wanna see some fuckin' blood!" I'm scared.

With half reassurance and rationalization, I tell myself, "I'm gonna blow these kids away when I'm on." Perhaps it won't go down like that but it's the recommended attitude for these rock shows when I'm just doing spoken word. Else, I'll come off like a boring little shit-talker.

The promoters are really cool. They want me to perform later on in the show when some bigger bands play and more people show up. So far, most of the bands I've seen are kind of weak. One band, SPLIT, plays this hip-hop kind of thing with just bass, drums and vocals. I dig that because it's different. Everything else sounds like shit I want to leave behind. Maybe I'm being judgmental. I know I am, but I'm just not on the same wavelength as most of these kids.

Sean from CAGE is here. He's cool. His band is cool. He says his band needs a new drummer. They're being real picky. That's good. Search out the best.

That green and black substance changed me, transformed me into a mess, and caused my only psychotic episode. Love for myself could never exist since I became a monster. I would never return to that town. I left it behind as much as my guilt would allow.

The cigarette between my index and middle fingers of my left hand is almost out. The blue glow of the television is the only light source in this room. In my right hand, I hold a milk carton displaying Matt's picture.

face was kissing my fist. He fell into the green-black abyss. I picked him up by his flight jacket and smashed his skull with my right hand. The ooze splashed around us. Matt was taken back and said, "What the fuck are you doing man?!!?"

I didn't know what I was doing. I wasn't thinking. Someone or something else was controlling my body and beating the shit out of my best friend. Eventually, Matt went unconscious.

The welts and bruises were forming on his head. I ripped off his jacket and shirt and bit into his arm. Breaking the skin, the blood flowed from his body and into my mouth. I began to devour and cry all at once. WHAT THE HELL WAS GOING ON!

I was becoming a carnivorous beast. Having no control over what was happening, the tears streamed from my eyes, down my cheeks and disguised themselves in the growing river of blood.

The meat from his body was giving me a strange energy. I started to feel more alive than ever and continued my feast.

I made my way to his torso and dug into his abdomen, consuming his organs. Strange fluids I had never tasted before filled me with satisfaction. The fluids added to the already disgusting smell of the dark cave. I ate and ate and ate and ate and ate, not leaving any room for supper.

*That was four years ago. Now, I'm occupying this apartment in Chicago under the name of Paul Radcliff. I rarely talk to any one for fear I might give away my secret. I don't even talk to the people at my job any more than I have to. Since I moved in, beer bottles, trash, dirty clothes, broken glass, bodily fluids and stench have built their homes in the small crevices of this new cave.

LATER

The show and the bands grew to higher level of artistic endeavor. Chris from my old band was there. It was great to see him. I take back all that shit I slung in *Sleeping in Beds of Broken Glass*, about him wasting my time etc... We just weren't meant to work together. We reminisced about the old band: After The Fact.

The cops wanted to kill me today. I read "Enjoy the Show" and these pigs threatened to shut down the whole show if I didn't give a public apology. I succumbed and the gig went on. It would have really sucked if the show was canned for my stupid blabbering when all these people spent all this time, money, and energy to make it happen.

One pig said, "You know, Free speech...whatever. But when you say, 'That one was dedicated to the Oxford Police,' that means you're talking to me," as he tapped the Oxford Police badge on his right shoulder, the only object justifying his moronic excuse for a life.

"That was you up there saying all that stuff," said the other cop.

"Yea," I answered with a slight tone of assertion mixed with an under-painting of fear. You see, these roadies at the show told me he overheard these pigs wanting to beat the shit out of me and then cover it up like tough-ass fascists.

They're pigs. They do whatever they want. They're humans in a role where humans should never be: with a power trip.

"Well we don't appreciate that," one cop explained.

"Yea we're here making sure everything runs

smoothly and you come out with that," said the first pig.

"Sorry," I said insincerely. They would only call off their antagonization if I made the public apology.

Truthfully, I was totally scared. Who knows what these cops would have done if our "conversation" escalated.

After I went on the mic and said "the big I'm sorry", one

pig forced out the words, "apology excepted." Fuck them, nazist tyrants.

8/9/97

I'm at my gig. The headlining band is sound checking. This Allston coffee house serves a drink titled, "Joe's Rocket" which is four shots of espresso with steamed milk. That's the kind of caffeineation I require to blow these people off the planet. "Global Destruction" is tonight's goal. The Slayer in my headphones is being drowned out by the sound check. Not many people here yet. I hope this place is packed.

8/10/97

So, I did the gig and it was all right. Let's put it this way: it didn't suck. I have had better and I have had worse.

8/18/97

The show rocked. It was this Charles Bukowski tribute. I read two Bukowski pieces and two of my own. Everyone else in the show performed well. Jim Dunn and Jawn P organized it. Nice guys. Ted Condo from the band 6L6 performed too. At the end of the show, some of the readers had their picture taken together. There I was: standing next to this heavy duty rock guy, trying to look as cool as he obviously was. Once the picture snapped, I turned to Ted (Mr. Condo) in an attempt to confess, "Hey man...nice job. I really like your band... BLAH, BLAH, BLAH...." Yet, he beat me to it, saying, "Hey I really liked your original work."

Wow. This blew my mind. We had a short conversation, I gave him a book, and he signed my mailing list (phone number and all). Damn.

attacked the back of my throat. I pulled the device away from my lips and half-coughed/half-snorted, trying to keep the hit in my system. Matt took the bol. Without releasing the hit, I held my breath and said to Matt, "This cave is really fuckin' cool."

I released the smoke from my lungs into the stale air of the cave and noticed a grotesque odor. "Do you smell that?" I asked Matt as he inhaled. He passed it to me. I took a hit.

Matt exhaled and answered, "Yea, it smells like shit and garbage. I'm gonna explore this place." I handed him the pipe. He stood up with it in his mouth, toked, and leaped from rock to rock, like a superhero conquering the rooftops of New York City. He jumped over to me and said, "This is cashed. I'll re-pack it." He did so and gave it to me. I lit the fresh holdings. The new herb accentuated the pain in the back of my throat like repeated electric shocks.

"Hey, look at this!" Matt inquisitively said to me as he held his lighter to a small crevice in the back of the cave. I jumped over to him, gave him the bol, and saw the same greenish-black sludge that was on the ground. It oozed out from a hole the size of my hand. The green-black shit was coming out in chunks. I moved my head closer in and inhaled deeply.

"AWE FUCK!" I yelled. "That shit smells nasty!"

"FUCK!" Matt agreed. "Let's just finish this bol and get the fuck outta dodge!"

"Sounds good." I took another hit. My eyes closed a little. My mouth began to grin. My throat was sore and dry. My body: tingly. I was stoned, but something wasn't right. Something felt different apart from the normal high and giggles. I was hungry and had a sudden urge to hit Matt.

I didn't know why. He hadn't pissed me off or anything, but before I realized what was happening, his

of these rural moms or dads wouldn't call the cops on a couple of weirdoes tromping along in their backyards. So, I kept looking around and crouching low, trying not to make any sounds. Of course, Matt was typically care free, talking comfortably and walking steadily.

When we arrived at our destination, we looked around, confused. We didn't see a cave. We kept hunting for it, only finding trees, peoples' back porches, and dead leaves on the ground. Then, I tripped over some rocks, fell flat on my face, and looked up with this stunning expression. My eyes watered from smashing my nose in the dirt. There it was: a small three foot tall, almost perfectly square hole.

"HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HE! HE! HA!" Matt laughed. "Are you all right?"

"Yea, I found it dude," I answered while pointing at my discovery.

"Killer!"

I picked myself up, brushing off the leaves and soil stuck to my blue jeans and green flight jacket. Matt went in first. "This is fuckin' weird," his voice echoed from inside the cave.

I squatted down and entered. It was dark as fuck. Thankfully, my eyes adjusted. I could see this green and black slime plastering itself to the carefully lodged rocks in the wall. I looked down and noticed that the floor was covered with the same substance. We had to step on these big rocks which shot up through the goop on the floor. At times, we walked on stones jutting out from the walls. Soon, we came to the larger room.

Matt sat down on some rocks, pulled out his bag, a bol, and a lighter. He packed it up, took a hit, and passed it to me. As I hit the pipe, the embers burned with dry perfection. The smoke shot through the narrow passageway of the paraphernalia and into my mouth. I sucked it down into my lungs. A stinging sensation

8/19/97

Thoughtless me, I took a gig the same day as my uncle's wedding. Luckily, the gig is earlier in the day and the wedding is at 5:30 P.M. Enough writing.

8/21/97

I just woke up from this crazy-ass dream. I was doing a show very similar to the Trixposure Spoken Word Show from last year's Eventworks festival. Although this show was happening years from now in Mendon, MA: the town where my high school was, next to where I grew up.

I had become some kind of minor celebrity and performers from around New England came to read and talk in this space resembling Dennison Hall in Framingham, MA. I wasn't the headliner by any means. Jan from Sparrs was the tech director. Lynn Stabile from Eventworks was the producer. My grandparents from Florida and my grandmother from Newburyport, MA had come to see me perform. Rachel, my cousin, was working the show somehow too.

I was waiting to read in this back office with Mark Kraus, Jack Powers, and Jan. I didn't have much time on stage, so I was going to read only two pieces. I kept changing my mind as to which two pieces. I walked across the room and read the list of performers. Almost every reader had been checked off except me. The gig was practically at it's end and I was still waiting. I asked Jan what was up with that and he knew nothing about it, but instructed me to hit it after the next speaker. I did so but when I grabbed the mic, this incredible feedback stabbed the crowd piercing each and every ear drum. I looked out into the crowd and saw Mike Baker from my job. He winced at the horrific sound.

I yelled, "I'm sorry" to the audience and walked off. Jan didn't know why the feedback occurred. It seemed like someone turned a dial all the way up once I hit the stage. Sabotaged.

Another performer went on. I tried again once they finished. This time, the mic wouldn't work. Something else really bad happened, but I can't quite remember it.

In subconscious to conscious reality hindsight, this seems childish, but I grew extremely pissy, and stormed out the back door. Someone yelled, "Duncan come back!" I told he/she to "Fuck off." I strutted down this cobble stone street. It seemed like Christmas time because shops had Santa Claus paraphernalia in their windows. I chilled out and told myself I owed it to those people to go back and speak. At this point, I was completely enraged. I hadn't been this angry in years. Usually, I'm agitated, but I keep it to a low grunt. This time, I was red in the face and ready to brawl. I walked back to the show. The last performer had left the stage and people were trudging out of the hall. As I walked like a fish traveling upstream, some kid yelled, "He's back!"

I screamed, "Free shit! Everybody sit down!" Half the audience did so. I went up onto the stage and checked the mic: no problems. I told Rachel to give everyone a free book and free CD on their way out. I apologized to the audience, cooled out, and began to free style this set about rich people in Mendon and the injustices involved before I woke up.

8/25/97

I'm living off the correct ratio of coffee and antihistamines. I wake up breathless with asthma, work all day with a night of poor sleep, meet Skinny Ratnutz and Rich Mackin for a CD meeting, go to Rich's and get Denise's book, and put Denise's book together. I need sleep.

Bob Marley was our soundtrack then. To us, he'd croon, "EASY SKANKIN'.....SKANKIN' IT EASY.....EASY SKANKIN'.....SKANKIN' IT SLOW.....EXCUSE ME WHILE I LIGHT THIS SPLIFF.....SPLIFF.....OH GOD I'VE GOT TO TAKE A LIFT.....LIFT.....FROM RE-AL-ITY I JUST CAN'T DRIFT.....DRIFT.....THAT'S WHY IM STAYIN' WITH THIS RIFF.....RIFF."

I started to grow my hair as a type of camouflage, a shield for my constant bloodshot eyes. Continually carrying a lighter and a small bottle of Visene wherever I went.

"Hey Pete, you wanna smoke, dude?" Matt asked me one lazy afternoon in November. We were lounging around my house like scattered documents on a lawyer's desk.

"Sure," I agreed as we slowly sat and stood up.

"Let's try and find that cave."

"Yea, that sounds cool. We'll smoke inside and christen it," Matt said. I had heard about this cave all my life, because my grandfather wrote a book about the history of my home town. Supposedly, it was located down the street and behind some houses. To smoke inside it, filling it with the pot smoke, and thus "christening" it, would prove to be a challenge as yet unfulfilled.

Apparently, the cave was man-made. A short tunnel constructed it's first passageway. This tunnel led to a larger, dome shaped room. Rumor had it, that behind this room was another chamber containing a Viking's treasure, but no one bothered to excavate and find out. Anyway, we didn't want gold. We just wanted to get high.

Next thing we knew, we were walking along this stone wall with an excellent view of my neighbors' back yards. I grew a little paranoid because in November, there was no foliage on the trees to hide you. Who's to say one

GREEN AND BLACK

Matt found a shitload of pot plants behind this guy's house. He stole about half of them and did the deed really early in the morning around 5:00 A.M.; so that the guy wouldn't be awake and Matt could still see what he was doing.

"Pete, you shoulda seen it," Matt began to tell me. "I was runnin' through the woods like a banshee, carryin all this herb. The shit reeked. My parents weren't up yet. So, I ran down to the basement and threw all the plants on my dad's scale. Stalks and all. Five pounds of it!"

As the summer rolled on, he and I cut the plants which were male and thus didn't yield any buds. The buds tended to be more potent, but after cutting and drying all the pot behind our parents' backs, we still had three pounds of fairly strong leafy intoxicant left over.

I was about sixteen that summer. All I did was work with my father, painting and roofing this one house. Usually, I was off work around 5:00. I'd take a shower and then head over to Matt's. We'd go hiking behind his parent's mansion. There were woods behind everybody's place in that small town. Frankly, that was all there was to do: go into the woods. You weren't bothered there: no cops, no parents, no teachers. Saturdays were spent hiking, smoking bowls of this shwag weed, and occasionally drinking rum and cokes. We were always fucked up.

Soon enough, school started and we hung up our shorts and T-shirts for jeans, flannels, and green flight jackets. We thought we were such hot shit. High as skyscrapers, we'd cruise through high school classes and talk a load of shit about everyone. We'd rank on teachers, students, and even cafeteria staff. No one was safe from our stoned wrath.

9/13/97

Dissolve is kicking the ass of my ear drums by way of headphone annihilation. I'm on a train right now, but I'm wishing I was in my bedroom. There, I can thrash around like a bloody fish. This is the impact on me from the rocking anthems of Dissolve.

I'm on my way to my parents house tonight. I have a gig tomorrow at the Espresso Bar in Worcester.

My show there on Thursday sucked. John Holland kicked me something really helpful. Since, I get wigged out when I don't hear a response from the audience while I'm talking, John told me to just ignore it. If I listen for it, then I loose my comfortability and thus accomplish nothing but fucking myself up. At least one person will always connect and it's always worth it for that one person.

I still have to figure out my set. I have a pretty good idea on what it will be; a mixture of characters who come into the record store and people I encounter in the city. However, I don't have a video camera. My little cassette recording is going to be bad quality, but maybe I'll learn something. Over and out.

9/15/97

Yesterday, I hung with my parents and then spoke in Worcester. My set went really well. I was far more pleased than my gig last Thursday. The bands that played after me were great. Dissolve, Veiled, Fragment, Barrit and Proclamation rocked. I actually had a lot of fun.

9/18/97

I love working with the View Camera in my photography. I've only made three pictures and I don't want to stop.

9/21/97

Exhausted. Can hardly even write. I performed at THE RAT today. It was a rock show: real fun. Then I kicked it at my uncle's wedding. Crazy.

10/3/97

I've become a photographic madman.

I woke up this morning with the intent of making coffee and taking a shower. Once I stepped out of my room, I choked at the natural light streaming from my kitchen window and resting on the hardwood floor. I set up the camera and got to work.

Yesterday, SLM exploded when Nat did this performance piece about how he's fed up with the department. A hostile discussion ensued. It was vicious.

"The Impending Spoken Word Destruction" is next week. It should be a great show.

10/5/97

I printed all day. I'm exhausted.

10/10/97

Did the "Impeding Spoken Word Destruction" last night. It rocked. I'm in Sound Studio Class. I need coffee.

10/13/97

I was in the darkroom for the greater part of the day. I came home and photographed some people around the house. Processed the negatives. Good night.

11/11/97

I'm exhausted. I didn't get to sleep until three in the morning and my body is beating the shit out of itself. We had band practice last night. It was the best one we've had

completely fucked up from carrying equipment. My mind commits genocide every morning. All my frustrations rise to a boil while I study the distorted buildings through my sunny venetian blinds. This is very silly.

I'm in this new Cafe on Mission Hill. It's a cool place, the only establishment on this stretch that isn't an eye sore. By placing myself at a window seat, I have direct sniper vision of the Osco Drug store across the street, as well as it's luxurious parking lot.

I just saw Scott Kennedy walk through the parking lot. He was the singer in this local Harcore outfit called Arise. They were great. Those were the days when I would get really stoned with Matt Johnston and we'd go into Worcester to see Arise and Overcast play.

I loved shows then.

Not that I don't love them still. It's just that the mystery is gone. I've been on every side of a gig: performing, producing, promoting, teching, money etc.....

There's a show tonight in Worcester. Snapcase is playing. I don't know if I want to go. I'm afraid to run into my past.

We played at The Space in Worcester, MA. No one was there. We played to our friends and a handful of young kids who sat in chairs on the side of the club. Two of the bands didn't show up. It definitely wasn't a moment of glory.

I saw Overcast, Today is the Day, and Converge at the Middle East last night. It was a good gig. I wished we were on the bill.

7/23/98

Last night was simply "Sabbath Bloody Sabbath." Hillside 176 rocked The Space in Worcester. I think we played fairly well. There were some fuck-ups here and there on my part. During "Hate You", I was rocking out a little to hard and jumped backwards. This caused me to trip over my amp, land my back on a cinder block and crash into Jay's amp and cab. Jay's shit landed on my head, making a small slit which bled like Niagara Falls. Through all of this I was still playing. (That's Punk Rock!?) Little did I know, I became disconnected from my amp and when I tried to reconnect, nothing came out of the speaker. My guitar was deader than a piece of driftwood on a north shore beach in bitter November. The song ended. Jay fixed his amp and cab. I used my other guitar for the rest of the set while my head bled all over the left side of my face like a spider web.

I need to be more careful when I'm up there.

8/15/98

Jessica color coordinated my calendar for me last week. Then she made me choose certain days to cross off. These days were to be known as "X-Days," days when I relax, days I don't work, days I don't stress out, days when I don't do shows.

It's hard to relax. My body isn't used to it. It wants to be exhausted, hurt, and overworked. My posture is

so far. I screamed the set the last two times we went through it. I need coffee so badly.

11/16/97

I went to my classes, boredom. The band practiced. It was okay. We have about fifteen minutes of material without talking in between songs.

I was on the bus the other night and some guy pulled a gun. Yes, just another night in Ye-ol-Bean Town. The entire bus of people unloaded to the street in a matter of three seconds. People scurried so fast that the frost and ice on the concrete caused their feet to slip so slightly. My heart raced faster than greyhounds for money.

Now I know what it's like to be in that kind of situation. Quite simply it sucks.

I was pretty scared. I mean, what if the dude just started firing and hit me? All I wanted to do was hop a train to go see my folks, but instead: complete fuckdown.

11/26/97

Beat the fuck out of every wall surrounding you. When the shit collects on the floor, the last thing you want to do is eat it. School has brought me to the front line of my war. The money is nil. The depression and frustration over exceed their daily quota.

My photography is overwhelming me. I have so much to print and so many tricks to pull on each picture: spot toning, spot bleaching, and always essential deification.

Paper writing, account overdrawing, time slipping bullshit was never the way to go. I wish someone had clued me in to this before I accepted the challenge.

Everything will work out. It always does.

Oh, and by the way Puff Daddy is the funniest joke I have ever heard. That guy is complete shit.

12/7/97

I performed at this DIY art space/apartment in Allston tonight. The gig was great but my performance sucked. I really wasn't prepared. I underestimated the whole thing and did a sloppy job. Yet, I've learned a lesson. When it comes down to not being ready for a gig, do old shit.

12/9/97

I'm in complete "fuck everything and everyone" mode because I keep trying to dub my spoken word to make a work CD. I'm shafted at every attempt. Now the studio is booked forever. Kill the frustration.

On a good note, my photo critique went well. Abe and Shelburn really dug the work. However, Nick and Barbara had some negative points. Except, they were positively negative, constructive. It gave me a challenge. Nick Nixon rules. He gave me some great feedback on the window pictures and let me borrow a book of industrial landscapes by Heinrich Riebeshel. Later.

12/10/97

I bummed around today. I went to some photo reviews. I met with Rainutz and Sharon to deal with some Jim Carroll/ Spoken Word/ Eventworks stuff. Tomorrow will be spent on the phone, figuring out more Jim Carroll crap, CD shit, and tour junk. Hey anything is better than listening to Neil Diamond. What an asshole.

2/15/98

My body creeks, cracks and crumbles with every movement.

The band played last night at this dive in Somerville called Club 3. We did pretty well as far as first shows go. Dana and Rich helped us bring our equipment there and load in. They were late getting to our practice space because they got lost. Nevertheless, they made it. The

Carroll. Damn. Meeting him and performing with him was a dream come true. He was funny shit too. He never stopped talking. Fine with us because we didn't know what to say to him. He talked about his new book and record that are coming out. Plus, we got all the dirt on Leonardo DiCaprio.

No gals, rest assured, he is not gay.

Although, it sounds to me like little Leo still has some growing up to do. Sleeping with any old super model and never speaking to her again is the precise definition of "complete fuckhead" in my personal dictionary.

Anyway, the band played the other day. We couldn't hear a damn thing and no one was there to see us. So, we were less than pleased. I need to hook up some more shows for the band plus spoken word for August.

5/23/98

A stiff neck, the "Minor Threat Live" video, and Sam Adams Summer Ale combine forces for the greater good of my evening.

Last night Hillside 176 played the Espresso Bar in Worcester. Great show. In fact, the best we've had so far. Most of the kids at the show were real young, like 15 or 16. It was great to see all the old dudes: Eric, Sean, Shane, Chief... everybody. There was this girl tending the bar who was real sweet. She bought a CD and told me her friend stole her copies of my books. I gave her a free copy of *Reach Out and Kill Someone*. She wanted a copy of *Sleeping in Beds of Broken Glass*. I told her that it's out of print since I hate the writing and I just let it sell out. She was real cool. I wish I got her name.

The band played well. I killed my guitar.

6/29/98

4/19/98

From my neck down, every joint in my body accuses my brain of harsh unstoppable punishment.

The zine show was today: setting up for the gig, performing spoken word, and ripping through a fast and torturous Hillside 176 set. Within the first three songs of Hillside, one of the pickups on my guitar unscrewed and stayed loose through the rest of the set. I had to keep jamming the screw back into the guitar. Not to mention the fact that my hand bled all over my forearm and onto my guitar. Clotted red specks coated my strings and pickups like Thanksgiving gravy.

4/25/98

I don't know what the fuck my problem is. I'm at the *Cerebrum* show before the gig starts. People are setting up tech. I'm just sitting in the balcony with all my shit, not knowing what the fuck to do with myself. Today is a day I want to sleep through and forget. Try again tomorrow. I don't know why I feel like this. My energy is low. I think I need food.

4/30/98

I feel different today-as if my brain is processing information differently and my conclusions are more serious.

5/18/98

My neck continues to torture me from my constant rocking out at yesterday's Hillside 176 show. The ideas spew from my mouth and out my middle fingers: Art, better Art, press packets, gigs, bigger gigs, networking, connections, lists. More to report later.

5/19/98

I've been letting my thoughts wander so much that I'm not sure what I've written down and what I haven't. Jim

actual show comprised of my friends mainly: Rich, Dana, Nat, Kelly, Michael Kennedy, Chris and his girlfriend Emily, and Kristie.

We played hard, fucking up a bit here and there, but still giving it all which is the most important thing. All in all a good experience.

2/16/98

I photographed in the Fort Point Channel today and yesterday. I dig this new shit I'm doing now with photography. I'm ansy about The Jim Carroll show and the CD. I talked to Eric from the Espresso Bar. He's going to book the band in April or May. That's cool.

2/25/98

I don't remember if I wrote this or not, but last weeks shows went really well. It felt good doing three shows in six days. Exhaustion plagued my muscle tissue but that's evidence for hard work.

I'm not too thrilled with the photographic work I made in the last two weeks. There were technical problems and a general consensus of "not enough punch." However, I did manage to compile some slides for a submission to American Photo. That rocked.

3/26/98

My eyes want to explode from their sockets like rocketeers shot from cannons in circus shows.

I performed in a SIM show tonight. I felt like the piece Skimp Ratnutz and I did wasn't that great, not tight enough. Working my ass off, not seeing lights at the end of caverns. Love that shit. Tired. Waiting for the phone to ring. Waiting to shut my eyes and do a million things tomorrow. Repeat all steps. Stir before serving.

3/30/98

I performed spoken word on Saturday night and it went really well. I ended up having to shave my head on Saturday, too. At first it was a simple trim with Seth's clippers. A good 45% into the phenomenal home hair cutting experience, the razor unscrewed from the motor and dangled like a spider making one wrong step in web construction. I fixed part of the razor, but couldn't reattach it to the motor. Seth could figure it out either.

What followed was a battle: me vs. my head. My weapons: dull scissors and a Norelco electric beard shaver. The ordeal lasted two hours. Two hours of cutting shaving, and repeat cleanings for the electric appliance of destruction. Finally I became the bald beauty I see in my mirror every morning. Yeah!

4/10/98

This notebook hasn't been in my hands for days. It requires maximum attention, like a newborn with a constant messy diaper.

I've been running around like a madman. Shows, flyering, CD's, everything in my face.

Right now, I'm chilling on the worn out white couch at Bad Girls Studios. Bits of fiber and splashes of dirt strategically place themselves on the surface of the couch like well worn camouflage for the thrift store junky. The couch embraces my tired ass and comforts my spastic nerves. Ohhh, love the couch!

Our CDs (ON TOUR WITHOUT A BAND, spoken word from Boston, MA) were finally done. We picked them up on Monday and I've been selling a few each day.

It's nice to have a little bit of spending money, especially money made off something I love to do.

I kept second guessing my work on the CD. Originally, it seemed not that successful. When compared to some of the last few gigs (Boston University and The

Out of the Blue Gallery) the CD appeared tame. Although I listened to individual audience reactions and people would laugh hard-not simple chuckles but roaring "I'm going to shit my pants?" buffoonery.

Everyone else on the disc has a lot of tracks, but I merely have two because they are so long. Yeah! Real spoken word takes time! Whatever?

Stress manifested itself in a strange form. The other day, the palm of my left hand throbbed with excruciating discomfort. I couldn't play guitar, let alone hold a fork. Dialing the telephone was an ordeal. Fear and frustration haunted my brain. I had shows coming up where playing guitar was a must. I messaged my hand, yielding sharp, shooting sensations till I could play guitar again.

Although I played horribly. I couldn't feel much, but the pain had somewhat subsided.

The next day, with the pain at a much less degree, Lisa from photo said the same thing happened to her. "It's just stress," she offered.

I'm fine now, but I think my body is trying to tell me something.

4/14/98

Weird. Tara Rebele, a spoken word performer I played with two years ago called me today. She received my CD in the mail. Jessica hooked me up with an address for this spoken word radio show and I sent a disc. Turns out that Tara is one of the DJs up there in New Hampshire and she freaked when she saw my name on the cover.

We chatted for a bit, but her air time approached rapidly so she left. She said she would play some cuts tonight. Apparently, after ten PM, FCC regulations for vulgarity were more lenient. So, being the potty mouth I am, my shit was probably played. Too bad it's so far into New Hampshire that I couldn't hear it in Bean Town.